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SUBJECT: ABYEI ROADMAP IMPLEMENTATION: JIU DEPLOYS, INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY DISCUSSES SUPPORT

REF: KHARTOUM 899

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Elements of the new Joint Integrated Unit were deploying to Abyei on June 18, as both the SAF and SPLA are concentrating their regular forces outside the region to be part of the new unit. The SAF reportedly tried in the June 12 JDB meeting to walk back the timeline agreed to by the NCP on withdrawing forces from the region. U.S. and European Chiefs of Mission agreed in a June 17 meeting on the need to jointly press the two sides to meet the Roadmap deadlines get the agreement's basic building blocks in place. End Summary.

New Abyei JIU Deploys

¶2. (SBU) The Abyei Roadmap decrees that a new Joint Integrated Unit (JIU) battalion will deploy within ten days, i.e., June 18. During the May outbreak, the SAF and SPLA components of the previous Abyei JIU fought each other and that unit was hopelessly compromised. According to the UN Deputy Regional Coordinator for Abyei, the SPLA troops designated for the new Abyei JIU flew from Juba to Wau on June 17 and are traveling overland to Abyei as of June 18, according to SPLM contacts. The SAF contingent reportedly arrived in Muglad from Khartoum on June 15. The date of their arrival in Abyei is unknown, though given the relative proximity of Muglad to Abyei, the SAF contingent should be ready for deployment.

While the Two Sides Concentrate Over the Horizon

¶3. (SBU) Both the SPLA and the SAF reportedly continue to concentrate troops on either side of the 1956 border. Two SPLA divisions are reported to have moved South and Southwest of Abyei town, one of which is believed to be north of the 1956 line. UNMIS confirms SAF continues to be build-up within Southern Kordofan state.

Stormy June 12 JDB Meeting

¶4. (SBU) SPLA sources said that the SAF tried to walk-back the portions of Roadmap dealing with withdrawal of regular SAF (this would include the notorious 31st SAF Brigade in the hear of Abyei town) and SPLA units from the area at the June 12 Joint Defense Board (JDB) meeting that was to approve plans to deploy a new Joint Integrated Unit (JIU) to Abyei. SPLA Chief of General Staff Ajak reported that that the SAF JDB representatives resisted the timeline for redeploying, "trying to renegotiate the agreement just signed by their political leadership," but that they ultimately relented.

In Juba, Kiir Takes Charge of Abyei

¶5. (SBU) SPLA sources tell ConGen Juba that President Kiir has personally taken charge of Abyei-related issues in Juba. Although

Kiir initially resisted demands for a robust SPLA intervention during the May fighting, his patience now appears to have worn thin. He reportedly told a June 14 meeting of the South Sudan Defense Committee that he would "reconsider" the June 8 Roadmap agreement if the SAF 31st Brigade has not left Juba town by July 1.

International Community Confers on Roadmap

¶ 16. (SBU) On June 17 in Khartoum, the EU Mission convened a meeting of the EU-Member States, the U.S., and Norway to compare notes on the Abyei Roadmap and coordinate the International Community's support of its implementation. CDA Fernandez emphasized the need to focus on getting the Roadmap's basic building blocks - JIU deployment, UNMIS patrols, the interim administration - right. Without these elements in place, the agreement will unravel and never reach the point where arbitration of the boundary dispute can actually take place. The CDA reviewed his June 16 meeting with UNSYG Special Representative Ashraf Qazi (reftel), noting that Qazi said that local SAF commanders still are prohibiting UNMIS patrols, on the grounds that they required clarification from Khartoum, and Qazi's complaint that UNMIS is excluded from Joint Defense Board Meetings, especially those that discuss the JIUs. The CDA highlighted the need for the international community to press the GoS on both these issues. He also flagged Qazi's claim that land mines were laid in the Abyei region during the recent fighting. Qazi feared that mines laid by the SPLA in defense of their positions could pose a particular threat to IDPs returning to their homes from the south, to which the majority fled.

¶ 17. (SBU) Other participants seconded the CDA's comments. Dutch Ambassador Johan Wolfe said his embassy has been in contact with UNMIS on providing support and training to the new JIU and to

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police. He added that a Dutch arbitration advisor is coming to Sudan to brief both sides on arbitral procedures, traveling to Juba first and then to Khartoum. AEC Coordinator Derek Plumbly noted that the two sides have now resolved the thorniest issue, sharing of oil revenues, and he hoped this is a cause for optimism. He urged that the international partners press the parties to quickly resolve some key immediate "pressure points:" mutual withdrawal of forces, freedom for NGOs to return, and the return of IDPs.

Reservations About Arbitration

¶ 18. (SBU) The Norwegian representative noted his embassy's reservations about arbitration of the boundary dispute. He said that arbitration should be a last resort if two sides cannot negotiate a mutually acceptable agreement. Arbitration ultimately will result in a winner and a loser. The side which believes it lost may reject the decision, resulting in further conflict and risk to the CPA. CDA Fernandez added that the Roadmap does not specify a role for the ethnic Misseriya - ie. are they "residents" of Abyei or nomads? - leaving them in a position to play a spoiler role, abetted by NCP hardliners. AEC Coordinator Plumbly suggested that a workshop on arbitration be organized for both the SPLM and the NCP, to ensure that both sides would hear the same message.

Comment

¶ 19. (SBU) The next few days are critical for the implementation of the Abyei agreement - a true test of whether the NCP is serious about resolving the Abyei dispute. Vice President Taha plans to travel to Juba on June 20 to discuss the installation of the interim administration and the terms of the arbitration mechanism. We will know by June 22 whether this agreement will hold and whether we may actually see some progress in Abyei and other areas of the CPA, or whether the CPA partners are likely to return to the status quo with an ever-increasing risk of a return to war. Post is counseling both sides not to let this agreement fail.

FERNANDEZ